

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5 1. A [high reliability] imaging system comprising: /

an optical scanning means adapted to produce optical images from an image source; /

an image storing means, connected for receiving and storing the optical images from the optical scanning means;

10 a plurality of image forming means, each connected for receiving the optical images from the image storing means and enabled further for forming the images on recording sheets; /

a multi-path sheet feeding means, connected and adapted for: (i) selectively receiving sheets from any one of a plurality of sheet dispensing means; / (ii) selectively delivering the sheets to the plurality of image forming means over any of a plurality of paths, so as to enable the forming of latent images onto the sheets, / and (iii) thereafter, selectively delivering said sheets with latent images to a sheet receiving means over any of the plurality of paths; and /

20 a controlling means adapted for selectively choosing paths for the sheets to move from the sheet dispensing means / through a selected one of the image forming means to the sheet receiving means; / the controlling means adapted for sensing sheet jams, for activating jam clearance actions, / and for selecting alternative sheet paths for optimizing apparatus reliability.

25 2. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a sheet jam sensor means and a jammed sheet receiving means, the sheet feeding means adapted for reversing sheet flow direction so as to move a jammed sheet from the sheet feeding means into the jammed sheet receiving means.

3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the sheet jam sensor means comprises a distributed array of a plurality of sensors, the plurality of sensors positioned for sensing each one of the sheets in

*plurality of scanners*

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turn and enabled for transmitting a signal to the controlling means upon sensing of each of the leading edges.

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